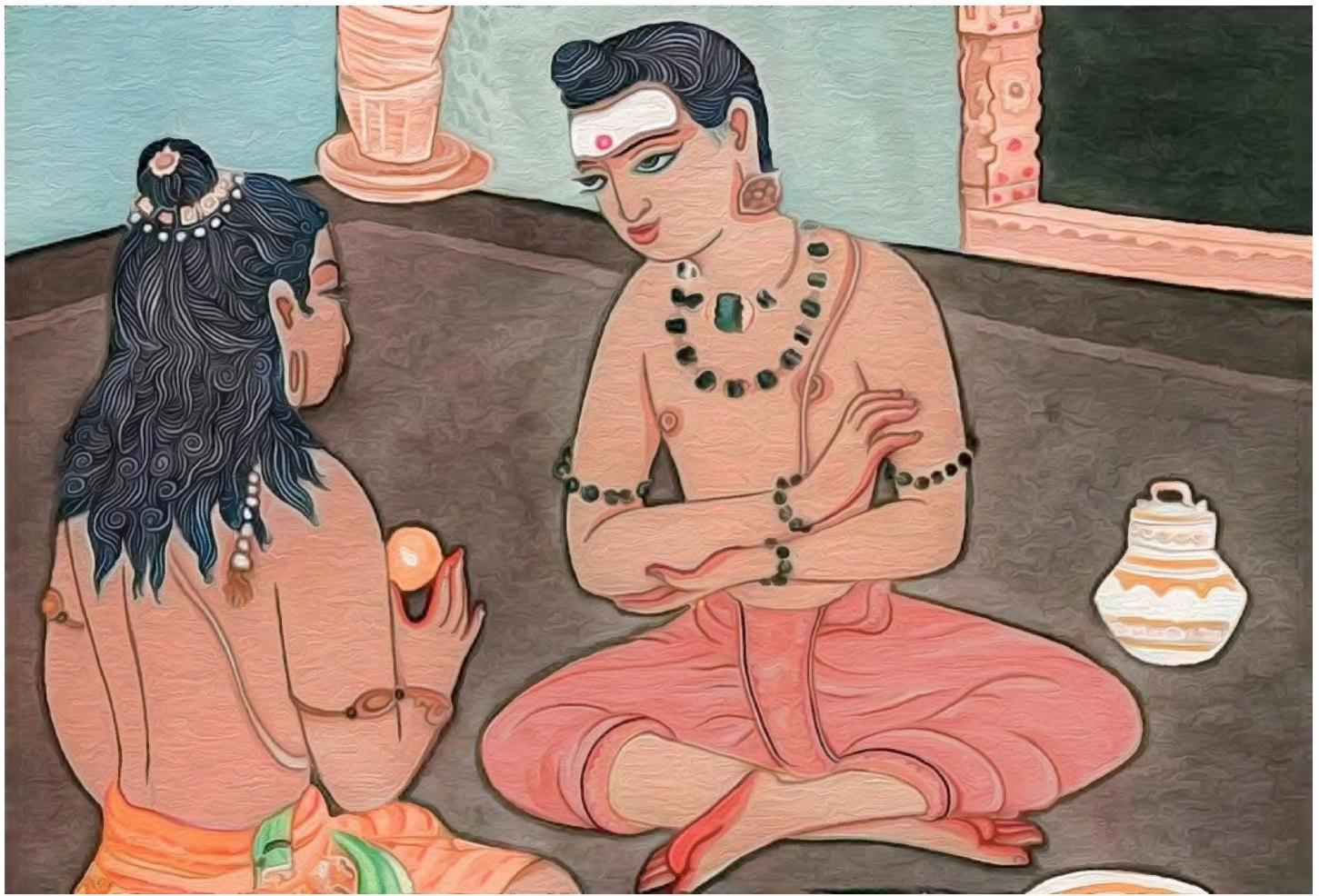


ANSWERING ISKCON

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Untenability of the Sampradaya argument by Iskcon-1

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There is an argument by Iskconites that, the knowledge received by Sampradaya alone is correct, any other means of knowledge is not accurate and is subject to change. The argument used by Iskconites is that, for logic there are 2 processes, one inductive and

the other deductive. So inductive logic requires people to make observations then make a general rule, for example all men are mortal, but question can be asked how do you know that all men are mortal, the answer that will be given in the inductive process is that since we do not observe any exception to the rule, the Iskconite responds to this stating that this might be the case, however it does not rule out the possibility of an unknown person being immortal. But if we take the deductive process, that as per this rule all men are mortal, for example some scripture says this, then job is done. The scripture is supposed to have been given by an all perfect person, hence such knowledge is infallible, as this comes from an unbroken tradition of teachers the knowledge is perfect. This is in short the argument of Iskconites on the Sampradaya, very well presented, there is however a flaw in the argument.

Please find the screen shot below referencing Prabhupada's own words on the inductive and deductive processes

There are two processes for attaining knowledge—one is inductive and the other is deductive. The deductive method is considered to be more perfect. We may take a premise such as, "All men are mortal," and no one need discuss how man is mortal. It is generally accepted that this is the case. The deductive conclusion is: "Mr. Johnson is a man; therefore Mr. Johnson is mortal." But how is the premise that all men are mortal arrived at? Followers of the inductive method wish to arrive at this premise through experiment and observations. We may thus study that this man died and that man died, etc., and after seeing that so many men have died we may conclude or generalize that all men are mortal, but there is a major defect in this inductive method, and that is that our experience is limited. We may never have seen a man who is not mortal, but we are judging this on our personal experience, which is finite. Our senses have limited power, and there are so many defects in our conditional state. The inductive process consequently is not always perfect, whereas the deductive process from a source of perfect knowledge is perfect. The Vedic process is such a process.

Book Raja Yoga Chapter 5

A similar argument was attempted by Charvakas, towards the Nyaya philosophers, but Buddhists broke this argument. Buddhists stated that, cause and effect are always related, it is always noticed that for a specific cause there is a specific effect, for a mango seed you get a mango tree only, you do not get a Guava tree. Similarly to establish something to be true, we simply need to invoke the relation of cause and effect. Now why am I stating all of this, since Iskcon is stating that we need to simply adhere to a particular tradition to have perfect knowledge, and that this has to be accepted at face value without any questioning since all questioning is a product of inductive process as per them. This is a totally wrong assumption, there is also another reason, the Upanishad uses this relationship of cause and effect to explain the reality. Now we have another method called Anvaya and Vyatireka, what this means is that if the cause is there the effect is there, this is Anvaya, if the cause is removed the effect is also absent, this is Vyatireka. Now if we take the example of pot and clay, if the clay is present, the pot is present, if the clay is absent the pot is also absent. Hence investigation is done in this

manner, this completely eliminates Prabhupada's argument of inductive and deductive processes. Many scientific laws use this same principle as well. Now then, a question may be asked, if a suggestion is being made to discard the Guru and Sishya Sampradaya and even discard the Shastra altogether. That is not being suggested here, we are simply stating that Shastra as such is not asking you to blindly believe what it says, Shastra is not telling you not to verify what it says. But ofcourse without Shastra the investigation becomes impossible. The Guru also has a very specific function over here. We will check on that as well. Now if we look at the Chandogya Upanishad it says the following

तस्य कृ मूलं स्यादन्यत्रान्नादेवमेव खलु सोम्यान्नेन शुङ्गेनापो मूलमन्विच्छान्दिः सोम्य शुङ्गेन तेजो मूलमन्विच्छ तेजसा सोम्य शुङ्गेन सन्मूलमन्विच्छ सन्मूलाः सोम्येमाः सर्वाः प्रजाः सदायतनाः सत्प्रतिष्ठाः ॥ ६.८.४ ॥

4. Where else, except in food, can the body have its root? In the same way, O Somya, when food is the sprout, search for water as the root; when water is the sprout, O Somya, search for fire as the root; when fire is the sprout, O Somya, search for Sat [Existence] as the root. O Somya, Sat is the root, Sat is the abode, and Sat is the support of all these beings.

Chandogya 6.8.4

Now let us understand what is being said here, the seeker is advised to go from the effect to the cause, here the Upanishad says food is the effect of water, water is the effect of fire and finally fire is the effect of ultimate reality.

What does this actually even mean, here food means something solid, water means liquid, so solidity has come from liquidity, liquidity comes from gaseous state that comes from particles and particles inturn come from vibrations these vibrations inturn when stopped resolve into space that space again resolves into existence (mere unqualified existence) as per the Upanishad. So a question may come, what is the function of the Guru here. Now the Guru in the Upanishad is not telling to do Bhajan of Krishna or Devotion of Krishna , then that you will go to Goloka post death, that is not what the Guru is stating here. The Guru is guiding his disciple to understand reality. Here the Guru is Uddalaka and the disciple is Shvetaketu who is his son. Now let us look at the verse from the Upanishad below

न्यग्रोधफलमत आहरेतीदं भगव इति भिन्दीति भिन्नं भगव इति किमत्र पश्यसीत्यण्व्य इवेमा धाना भगव इत्यासामङ्गैकां भिन्दीति भिन्ना भगव इति किमत्र पश्यसीति न किंचन भगव इति ॥ ६.१२.१ ॥

1. Uddālaka said, 'Bring me a fruit from this banyan tree.' Śvetaketu replied, 'I have brought it, sir.' Uddālaka: 'Break it.' Śvetaketu: 'I've broken it, sir.' Uddālaka: 'What do you see inside?' Śvetaketu: 'There are tiny seeds, sir.' Uddālaka: 'Break one of them, my son.' Śvetaketu: 'Sir, I've broken it.' Uddālaka: 'What do you see in it?' Śvetaketu: 'Nothing, sir'.

The next verse is as follows

तं होवाच यं वै सोम्यैतमणिमानं न निभालयस एतस्य वै सोम्यैषोऽणिम्न एवं महान्यग्रोधस्तिष्ठति श्रद्धस्व सोम्येति ॥
६.१२.२ ॥

2. Uddālaka said: 'O Somya, the finest part in that seed is not visible to you. But in that finest part lies hidden the huge banyan tree. Have faith in what I say, O Somya

Chandogya 6.12.1-2

So here the Guru is telling the Sishya to look analyze and then understand that from the most imperceptible from the most subtle comes the gross. From the unseen subtle parts of the seed comes the huge banyan tree. Even so, from the unseen subtle cause comes this whole universe is what is being told here.

So this is what the Guru is telling the Sishya, this is the methodology used by the Guru.

Let us come to one more verse from the Upanishad

तस्य यथाभिनहनं प्रमुच्य प्रब्रूयादेतां दिशं गन्धारा एतां दिशं व्रजेति स ग्रामाद्वामं पृच्छन्यणिडतो मेधावी
गन्धारानेवोपसम्पद्यैतैवमेवेहाचार्यवान्पुरुषो वेद तस्य तावदेव चिरं यावत्र विमोक्ष्येऽथ सम्पत्य इति ॥ ६.१४.२ ॥

2.—And as someone may remove that person's blindfold and say, 'Gandhāra is this way; go this way,' and the intelligent man goes from one village to another, asking his way and relying on the information people give, until he reaches Gandhāra; similarly, a person who gets a teacher attains knowledge. His delay is only as long as he is not free of his body. After that he becomes merged in the Self.

Chandogya Upanishad 6.14.2

Now the Upanishad talks about a Rich man kidnapped from his house and thrown into a deserted place, later a merciful man comes and removes the blindfold from the man and this Rich man being intelligent asks other people passing by for the way to his country Gandhara. Similarly the seeker in order to know the reality uses his intelligence and takes the help of the teacher.

Hence the Upanishad says आचार्यवान् पुरुषो वेद - through the teacher know it. It also uses the word "मेधावी", meaning being intelligent. So what is the student supposed to do, he is supposed to investigate go from effect to cause with the help of the Guru and Shastra.

This is the actual Sampradaya or tradition meant by the Veda. This is the actual Vedic method, not some rubbish of only 4 authorised Sampradaya and so on. This is not based on some commentary or speculation this is being talked base on the Upanishad alone.

Now the Upanishad says the following

परीक्ष्य लोकान्कर्मचितान्नाह्यणो निर्वेदमायान्नास्त्यकृतः कृतेन ।

तद्विज्ञानार्थं स गुरुमेवाभिगच्छेत्समित्याणि: श्रोत्रियं ब्रह्मनिष्ठम् ॥ १२ ॥

12. Let a Brahmin having examined the worlds produced by karma be free from desires, thinking, ‘there is nothing eternal produced by karma?; and in order to acquire the knowledge of the eternal, let him Samid (sacrificial fuel) in hand, approach a perceptor (preceptor?) alone, who is versed in the Vedas and centered in the Brahman.

The next verse is

तस्मै स विद्वानुपसन्नाय सम्यक्प्रशान्तचित्ताय शमान्विताय ।

येनाक्षरं पुरुषं वेद सत्यं प्रोवाच तां तत्त्वतो ब्रह्मविद्याम् ॥ १३ ॥

13. To him who has thus approached, whose heart is well subdued and who has control over his senses, let him truly teach that Brahmavidya by which the true immortal purusha is known

Mundaka Upanishad 1.2.12-13

The Upanishad clearly tells that one approaches a Guru and then questions and investigates to find out the reality. The same process is used as told in the Chandogya. This is the tradition as per the Upanishad.

So now I am also presenting the tradition based on the Upanishad alone, not even based on the commentary simply the verses of the Upanishad itself. Not only that following is the verse from the Katha Upanishad.

अन्यत्र धर्मादन्यत्राधर्मादन्यत्रास्माकृताकृतात् ।

अन्यत्र भूताच्च भव्याच्च यत्तत्पश्यसि तद्वद् ॥ १४ ॥

14. What thou seest other than virtue and vice, other than what is made and what is not, other than the past and the future, tell me that

Kathopanishad 1.2.14

Here Nachiketa is telling Yama “यत्तत्पश्यसि तद्वद्” That which you see, tell me that. So here the Guru should have been himself realised and he is supposed to give the same realisation to the disciple.

What must the Guru see, following is what the Isavasya Upanishad says

यस् तु सर्वाणि भूतान्य् आत्मन्य् एवानुपश्यति ।

सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं ततो न विजुगुप्सते ॥ ६ ॥

6. And he who sees all beings in himself and himself in all beings has no aversion thence.

Isavasya Upanishad verse 6

This is the vision the Guru has. The Sishya gets the following vision post having been instructed by the Guru

हा॒रु हा॒रु हा॒रु । अहमन्नमन्नमन्नम् । अहमन्नादोऽ॒ ३ हमन्नादोऽ॒ ३ हमन्नादः । अहं श्लोककृदहं श्लोककृदहं श्लोककृत् । अहमस्मि प्रथमजा ऋता ३ स्य । पूर्वं देवेभ्योऽमृतस्य नाआआभायि । यो मा ददाति स इदेव मा ३ वाः । अहमन्नमन्नमदन्तमा ३ द्विः । अहं विश्वं भुवनमध्यभवा ३ म् । सुवर्नं ज्योतीः ॥ १० ॥

10. Oh! Oh! Oh! I am food, I food, I food! I food-eater, I food-eater, I food-eater! I am the combining agent, I the combining agent, I the combining agent. I am the First-born of the existence! Prior to gods, the centre of the immortal. Whoso giveth me, he surely doth thus save. I, the food, eat him who eats food. I the whole being destroy. Light, like the sun!

Taittiriya Upanishad 3.4.10

So this is the realisation the Sishya gets, I am everything. This is the true Sampradaya based on the Upanishads itself. Now the function of the Guru is for facilitating this realisation for the Sishya. Guru becomes the means to know this experientially. Hence Upanishad says आचार्यवान् पुरुषो वेद - know this through Acharya. Since without Acharya experiential knowledge is not possible. Hence Sampradaya, it must consist of such visionaries.

This proves without doubt that the Sampradaya argument used by Prabhupada and others has no meaning whatsoever. Although this refutes Prabhupada's theory of Sampradaya, to make this more effective we will take the verses from the Bhagavata Puranam itself and show how Bhagavata Puranam is inline with these teachings. Since Iskcon considers Bhagavatam to be the King of scriptures, we will show actually what the King wants to say.

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